

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05 DPW-01

IO-13 DHA-02 ORM-02 CU-02 MCT-01 SY-05 OMB-01 /088 W

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R 021123Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2874

INFO AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

CINCPAC HONOLULU

DIA WASHDC

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 1 OF 2 BANGKOK 24724

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, TH

SUBJECT: THANOM'S REPORTED PLANS TO RETURN TO THAILAND

REF: A) BANGKOK 7705; B) GANGKOK 24616

SUMMARY: THANOM REPORTEDLY AGREES TO WAIT UNTIL SITUATION MORE FAVORABLE TO HIS RETURN. RTG PREPARING CONTINGENCY PLANS IF FORMER PRIMIN THANOM KITTIKHACHON NONETHELESS RETURNS TO THAILAND WITHIN THE NEXT FEW DAYS TO ENTER THE MONKHOOD AS IN WIDELY RUMORED. POLICE ROUTINELY CHECKING INCOMING FLIGHTS BUT AS OF SEPT 2 HAVE NO INSTRUCTIONS TO STOP OR TO DETAIN HIM. SENI ADMITS THERE ARE CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL DIFFICULTIES IN PREVENTING THANOM'S RETURN AND IN DEALING WITH THANOM ONCE HE REENTERS THAILAND. NSCT AND NATIONAL LABOR COUNCIL ORGANIZE FOR PROTEST RALLY FOR SEPT 2. END SUMMARY.

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1. ACCORDING TO THE THAI AMBASSADOR IN SINGAPORE,

FORMER PRI-

MIN THANOM KITTIKHACHON HAS AGREED TO WAIT UNTIL THE SITUATION WAS MORE FAVORABLE BEFORE RETURNING TO THAILAND. THANOM DID SAY, HOWEVER, THAT IF HIS FATHER DIED, HE WOULD HAVE TO RETURN AT ONCE. THIS INFORMATION WAS IN TELEGRAMS FROM THE THAI AMBASSADOR TO SINGAPORE, CHAMNONG PHAHUNRAT, TO THE FOREIGN MINISTRY, WHICH WAS SHOWN TO REPORTERS BY DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER LEK NANA ON SEPTEMBER 2.

2. THE RTG HAS BEEN PREPARING PLANS TO DEAL WITH FORMER PRIMIN THANOM KITTIKHACHON IF HE RETURNS TO THAILAND WITHIN THE NEXT FEW DAYS TO ENTER THE BUDDHIST MONKHOOD, AS WAS WIDELY RUMORED. PRIMIN M R SENI PRAMOT CALLED AN EMERGENCY MEETING ON SEPT 1 WITH FORMIN PHICHAIRATTAKUN, POLICE DIRECTOR-GENERAL SISUK MAHINTHORATHEP, POLICE DEPUTY DIRECTOR-GENERAL CHUMPHON LOHACHALA, AND MANAGING DIRECTOR OF THAI INTERNATIONAL AIR MARSHAL CHU SUTHICHOT TO SET UP MEASURES FOR MAINTAINING PEACE AND ORDER SHOULD THANOM RETURN. SENI DID NOT GIVE DETAILS ON WHAT THE MEASURES ARE.

3. DEMOCRAT MP'S MET ON SEPT 1 TO DISCUSS THE ALTERNATIVE COURSES OF ACTION OPEN TO THE GOVERNMENT IF THANOM RETURNS. THERE WAS CRITICISM VOICED OVER ALLEGED WEAKNESS OF SENI GOVERNMENT BUT NO SPECIFIC SUGGESTIONS VOICED AS TO COURSE OF ACTION TO FOLLOW IF THANOM RETURNS.

4. THE POLICE ARE ROUTINELY CHECKING ALL INCOMING FLIGHTS. POLICE OFFICERS AT A HIGH OPERATIVE LEVEL SAID THAT THEY HAVE NO RPT NO INSTRUCTIONS TO STOP OR DETAIN HIM IF HE DOES COME. THESE OFFICERS ALSO SAID THAT IF HIS FATHER DIES, THANOM WILL RETURN TO THAILAND, REGARDLESS OF ANY CONSEQUENCES HIS RETURN MIGHT PROVOKE.

5. PRIHIN SENI ADMITTED ON SEPT 1 THE DIFFICULTIES WHICH THANOM'S RETURN PRESENTED THE GOVERNMENT. THE GOVERNMENT COULD NOT PROHIBIT HIS RETURN, AS HE HAD THE CONSTITUTIONALLY GUARANTEED RIGHT TO DO SO. THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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GOVERNMENT WAS ALSO UNCERTAIN WHETHER THANOM COULD BE CHARGED ON ANY CRIMINAL COUNT, SINCE THERE HAS NEVER BEEN ANY DEFINITE FINDING THAT HE WAS GUILTY OF ANY OFFENSE. THE SANYA GOVERNMENT CONFISCATED THE PROPERTIES OF THANOM, PRAPHAT CHARUSATHIAN AND NARONG KITTIKHACHON IN AUGUST, 1974 UNDER ART 17 OF THE INTERIM CONSTITUTION, BUT THIS CONSTITUTION HAS SINCE BEEN REPLACED, AND ART 17 GAVE SWEEPING POWERS TO THE GOVERNMENT WHICH WOULD NOT BE

GRANTED IN THE PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES. MOREOVER, SEIZURE OF PROPERTY UNDER THE INTERIM CONSTITUTION HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH THE QUESTION OF GUILT OR INNOCENCE.

6. AS REPORTED IN REF A, A MILITARY COMMITTEE PROBING THE ACTIONS OF THE THANOM GOVERNMENT DURING THE RIOTS OF OCTOBER, 1973, CONCLUDED IN MARCH, 1976, THAT THE GOVERNMENT ACTED LEGALLY AND PROPERLY UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES. FORMER PRIME MINISTER KHUKRIT PRAMOT AND MG PRAMAN ADIREKSAN, FORMER DEFENSE MINISTER UNDER KHUKRIT, HAVE CONFIRMED THE EXISTENCE OF SUCH A REPORT. THE ACCURACY OF THE CONCLUSIONS HAS NOT BEEN LEGALLY CHALLENGED, BUT THE REPORT ITSELF HAS NEVER BEEN PUBLISHED. THE CABINET HAS TAKEN NO ACTIONS ON THE REPORT.

7. LEADERS OF THE NATIONAL STUDENT CENTER OF THAILAND (NSCT) AND THE ANTI-DICTATORSHIP FRONT (THE TWO GROUPS AMOUNT TO THE SAME THING) CALLED FOR A RALLY TO BE HELD AT SANAM LUANG IN BANGKOK ON SEPT 2 TO PROTEST THE REPORTED PLANS OF THANOM TO RETURN. NSCT SECRETARY-GENERAL SUTHAM SAENGPRATHUM TOLD THE PRESS ON SEPT 1 THAT REPS OF STUDENT AND PEOPLE'S ACTIVIST GROUPS WOULD MEET ON SEPT 3 TO WORKOUT PRACTICAL MEASURES TO BE TAKEN IF THANOM RETURNS.

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FILE; TELEGRAM TEXT FOR THIS SEGMENT IS UNAVAILABLE

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